

Board Meeting Update

April 15, 2016

Central DeWitt Constituents,

As I do every month, the following are the highlights of the April 13, 2016 regular school board meeting. I hope you enjoy these updates that are focused on keeping you informed of what is taking place at the school board table.

- If you would like to view any of the public documents that are available to the board, you can visit our BoardDocs site to view the agenda and the supporting documents that go with each agenda item. This information can be found [at this site](#). You can also view the video recording of the school board meeting [at this link](#).
- The Board held two public hearings prior to the start of the meeting. The first was in regard to a budget amendment for this fiscal year. The second was in regard to the adoption of the certified budget for next fiscal year. No one from the public was present to speak about these two issues.
- High School students, Julia Campbell and Skylar Bloom, were in attendance to give their presentations that they have developed for State FFA Contest. They were absolutely phenomenal. I would encourage you to watch them, and I've bookmarked the video of the board meeting so that you can go directly to that part of the meeting by hitting [this link](#). Good luck to both Julia and Skylar as they go to State FFA Contest!
- We were informed that the Clinton County Development Association (CCDA) is going to be helping with our elementary reading initiatives soon! The CCDA has established a fund for the next three years, in the amount of \$75,000, that will be used to support elementary reading within the Clinton County schools. The money will need to be used for technology that is used for reading instruction (hardware or software). All we have to do is submit the number of 2nd grade students we have at the end of the school year, and the funds are going to be distributed on a per pupil basis. We've been told to plan on \$100 per student, but it could be as much as \$125! This is a tremendous showing of the support we have from the CCDA, and our students will certainly benefit from this generosity!

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- The Principals presented the Iowa Assessments results for this school year. They can be found [at this link](#). As you'll see our scores continue to go up for the most part. We still have many areas that we are working on, and we are never fully satisfied, but we are continuing to progress, which is a great thing! You'll see in the document that we have the scores from the last four years in each of the grade levels. If you look at the scores horizontally, we call this the "apples to oranges comparison" because these are students in the same grade level each year. They are different students each year. What we pay more attention to is the "apples to apples comparison" which you can see by following the various colors on the charts. For example, the 2nd grade students in 2014-2015 are in black, and you can follow these students to the 3rd grade in the 2015-2016 chart, which are also black. This allows us to get a clearer picture of how the specific groups of students are progressing. There are a lot of reasons to celebrate by looking at these charts, and I'd like to thank and congratulate our students and teachers for continuing to progress in all of these areas! Job well done!
- Within the administrative reports, the principals gave an update of the various happenings within their buildings. We also had High School Math Teachers, Eric Olson and Keith Townsley, in attendance to talk about upcoming changes in the High School Math Department. The changes include how students progress through their mathematics courses in the high school, and there are also great changes coming that will allow the mathematics course to be much more self-paced. Eric and Keith do a great job of explaining what is going to be happening if you'd like to watch the video [at this link](#).

We also spoke at length about the alignment of administrators within the school district. With the resignation of Amy Wichman as our Director of Innovation & Instruction, I have decided to move Jen Vance into that role, starting in the 2016-2017 school year. Jen is currently our Principal at Ekstrand Elementary. That leaves a vacancy with the Elementary Principal role. After a great deal of conversation amongst the administrative team, we've decided not to fill that administrative position at this time. Instead, we're pursuing a different administrative alignment that will consist of the following:

- George Pickup – Middle & High School Principal
- Tim Bradley – Elementary & Intermediate School Principal
- Terri Selzer – Middle & High School Assistant Principal
- Mike Miller – Elementary & Intermediate School Assistant Principal
- Jen Vance – Director of Innovation & Instruction

There are a lot of reasons we're moving in this direction after weighing out the pros and cons. A few of the key things we've discussed include the following:

- A more appropriate alignment of administrators - middle school being much more like high school than it is intermediate...and intermediate being much more like elementary school than it is middle school
- Ease transitions between grade levels - this approach bridges the administrative gaps between elementary and intermediate school...and middle school to high school

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- The role of school leadership is gradually changing - with the implementation of our Teacher Leadership & Compensation (with instructional coaches) and our Induction Consortium (for new teachers), this has greatly changed the role of the principals
- The timing and staffing is right for such a change - meaning we have the right teachers, the right staff, and the right administrative team in place to make this work...and work exceptionally well
- Not our primary reason, but it also saves the school district money. With not filling the elementary principal position, this saves the district that position. As our student enrollment continues to creep down, it is likely that we'll be seeing some budget reductions in the coming year, and a change like this helps

HOWEVER...as we move into this transition, our ears and eyes are going to be open. It will be something that we continually review through the coming year, and if this administrative alignment isn't working for some reason, there is no doubt that we will be revisiting what we're doing. But at this time, we have a great deal of confidence in the team we have in place...and the ability to make this move.

The Board had a lot of questions regarding this proposal, which is certainly understandable. Most of the questions revolved around the hope that we are not spreading ourselves too thin administratively. For your convenience, you can view this conversation in its entirety by clicking [this link](#).

- The Board approved a proposal that will allow the school district to purchase new laptops for our students in grades 4-12. We will also be purchasing iPads to replace what we currently have at Ekstrand Elementary. We are currently in our 5th year with the laptops and ipads that were purchased on a lease program through Apple Financing several years ago. As we've been talking about for almost a year now, this proposal will replace everything that was purchased under that original lease. In all, we will be purchasing 1,150 laptops and 240 iPads for our students. This purchase will also be on a lease program through Apple Financing. We will have a payment of approximately \$125,000 twice each year, for the next four years. This is an incredible opportunity that we are able to provide for our students, and the educational environment we have is greatly enriched by the technology our students have access to. The full proposal can be viewed [at this link](#).
- Under this month's personnel report, the Board approved the following:
 - Resignation of Spencer Lueders from his positions as 1st Grade Teacher **and** 8th Grade Football Coach
 - Resignation of Matt Ohnemus from his positions as Assistant Varsity Wrestling Coach **and** Assistant Varsity Football Coach
 - Recommendation to hire Matt Ohnemus for the position of Head Varsity Wrestling coach
 - Recommendation to hire Melissa Dever to fill the position of 7th Grade Volleyball Coach

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- Resignation of Pam Kennedy from the Assistant Varsity Boys Soccer Coach position
 - Recommendation to hire Madison Cousins to fill the role of Assistant Varsity Boys Soccer Coach
 - Recommendation to hire Adam Grell as Assistant Varsity Wrestling Coach
 - Recommendation to hire Tim McClimon for the Special Education Associate position that recently opened up at the high school
 - Termination of the Bus Driving contract with Jaci Paarmann, effective March 15, 2016.
- The Board approved the budget amendment for this school year, and they also approved the certified budget for the next fiscal year. The full budget is available [at this link](#).
 - The Board accepted two donations that were recently made to the school district:
 - A Group of Caring Men: \$800 donation toward negative lunch balances
 - Eric & Pamela Petersen: \$500 donation toward baby changing stations that will be located in the High School Atrium restrooms for those attending events there

Those are the highlights of this month's regular meeting. The next regular board meeting is on Wednesday, May 11, 2016, at 6:00 pm, in the Central DeWitt Middle School Media Center. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns regarding what I've written here...or regarding anything else, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Thank you,



Dr. Dan Peterson, Superintendent
Central DeWitt Community School District